

TC 853: Information Technology and Organizations
Spring, 2010 | Prof. Nicole Ellison

Schedule: Class meets Wednesdays 5-7:50 PM
Location: 202 Urban Plan & Land Arch Bldg
Instructor: Dr. Nicole Ellison
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Office Hour: To be determined

Course Description

This discussion-oriented course examines the economic, social and organizational changes associated with new online technologies, specifically focusing on “Web 2.0” companies and concepts. Through coursework consisting of readings, in-class discussions, guest lectures, and hands-on projects and papers, students will use established concepts and theories to understand and predict developments in the Internet industry. The course will have two focus areas: (1) Established economic and communication-based principles and theories (such as Network Effects and Social Capital) and (2) Web 2.0 companies and concepts (such as the “Long Tail” and mass collaboration). Industry perspectives on these issues will be explored through guest lectures and readings.

Course Objectives

When students complete the course, they will be able to:

- Discuss and describe major economic concepts critical for understanding the current information and technology landscape
- Define and describe the characteristics of social media
- Describe the unique affordances of successful “Web 2.0” companies and services and give examples of Web 2.0 implementations
- Be able to list the characteristics of a valuable social network
- Know how to use online tools to successfully manage one’s online self-presentation and social network

Primary texts

A reader will be available for purchase online; other readings will be in ANGEL or online.

Grading Scheme

Each assignment will be graded on a scale of 0 to 4.0. The final grade of record will be based on students’ achievements in the following areas and weighted according to the following:

In-class Participation	5%
Online participation	5%
“We Googled You” Case Study & Online Self-Presentation Assignment	15%
Social Network Assessment and Development Assignment	15%
Web 2.0 Company Presentation	20%
Research Paper (35%) & Presentation (5%)	40%
TOTAL POSSIBLE	100%

All students are required to spend time each week keeping up to date with industry news in the web 2.0 space and to follow technological and cultural developments that might affect the kinds of organizations we will be studying. Contributions to in-class and online discussions will be considered in the participation portion of the final grade.

Students are responsible for viewing their grades in ANGEL and informing the instructor of any discrepancies. Also, students must keep copies of any work submitted until final grades are submitted. If you are concerned about your grade please make an appointment to discuss the situation with the professor as early as possible. After the final class meeting, there will be no opportunities to improve your grade. Extra credit opportunities may or may not be available.

Online participation

Each student will be required to review relevant materials and to share 5 resources or links with the class over the course of the semester. I suggest we use a closed Facebook group to do so. We can discuss this on the first day. If there is not opposition to the idea, the group we can use is called "TC853 (Spring 2010)." You should be able to easily find it using Facebook search. When you post your resource, write a short paragraph (3 sentences) explaining the relevance of the story, article or resource and/or why you found it interesting or important. You should post at least five over the course of the semester with a limit of one credited post per week.

Research Paper

Each student will write a research paper on a topic related to the course content and related to the student's chosen area of study. This topic should be discussed with and approved in advance by the instructor. This paper should be approximately 8 – 10 pages in length (not including title page), typed, with a complete bibliography (in APA format). Papers are due at the beginning of class on the day they are due. No late papers will be accepted.

Papers should incorporate concepts, ideas, theories, and observations from class. Appropriate topics include: the ways in which a specific technology is affecting a particular industry, drawing upon concepts discussed in class as well as other relevant ideas or theories; an in-depth look at a particular company (its history, predictions about its future, how it incorporates concepts or rules discussed in class); or another topic of your choosing. All paper topics should be submitted to the instructor via email by the date specified in the syllabus and must be approved.

Students will be expected to present a 8-10 minute overview of their paper to the class. A visual aid, such as PowerPoint, is expected. Presentations that are more than one minute over time will be docked one full grade.

Web 2.0 Company Presentation

Each student will prepare a 6-8 minute presentation on a company that exemplifies Web 2.0 principles and is important for others in the class to know about and understand. Students will analyze the site using concepts and principles discussed in class and will present important information about the company, such as history, as well as strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (as appropriate). Before presenting, each student should submit one of the following to the instructor: a 2-page paper, a full-sentence outline, or a powerpoint deck with notes. (Please note that students should submit the names of 3 companies to the instructor on Jan. 27 in order to avoid redundant presentations.)

Online Self-Presentation Assignment (3-4 pages)

- A. Consider your “dream job” and the kinds of attributes a successful candidate for a position in this field should have.
- B. Then, pretend you are a third party who is trying to find out information about you on the Internet based on your name (you may need to include one or two facts about you, such as location). Do a thorough search using a variety of search engines and online tools. What kind of impression would this person get? Remember, there may be information online about other people with your same name, but a third party wouldn’t know this.
- C. Finally, consider what actions you could take to create an online impression that matches the attributes you described in the first part of the assignment. Come up with a plan of action for achieving your online self-presentational goals. Describe the information you found and how it relates to the characteristics you wrote down in step A.
- D. Read the “We googled you” case study (from the *Harvard Business Review*). Using ideas and concepts discussed in class, in our other readings, and from any additional online research you wish to do, describe the advice you would give Fred. (You may wish to jot down some notes BEFORE you read the expert’s advice.). Which one of the experts do you agree with most and why? Which do you disagree with and why?

Social Network Assessment and Development Assignment (2-3 pages)

- A. Read “How to manage your network” and do the activity described in the “Diagnose your network” section on page 3-4. According to the principles described in the article and our discussions, how could your network be improved? What are its strengths and weaknesses?
- B. Create a profile in an online networking site such as LinkedIn. Take specific actions to improve your network.

Your paper should summarize what you did and what you discovered, incorporating concepts from the reading.

Academic Honesty

Academic Honesty: Article 2.3.3 of the Academic Freedom Report states: “The student shares with the faculty the responsibility for maintaining the integrity of scholarship, grades, and professional standards.” In addition, TC 853 adheres to the policies on academic honesty specified in General Student Regulation 1.0, Protection of Scholarship and Grades; the all-University Policy on Integrity of Scholarship and Grades; and Ordinance 17.00, Examinations. (See Spartan Life: Student Handbook and Resource Guide and/or the MSU Web site www.msu.edu.)

Therefore, unless authorized by your instructor, you are expected to complete all course assignments, including homework, lab work, quizzes, tests and exams, without assistance from any source. Students who violate MSU rules may receive a penalty grade, including but not limited to a failing grade on the assignment or in the course.

Attendance Policy

Because this is a discussion-oriented graduate class, attendance at every class meeting is crucial. If you aren’t present, you can’t contribute. Therefore, for each class meeting that is

missed after two classes, each students' participation grade will be lowered by .5. It is not possible to pass the class if four or more classes are missed.

Classroom Courtesies

If you need to have a conversation with your neighbor, please step outside the classroom so that others in the classroom are not distracted. When you are in the classroom, it is expected that you are actively engaged in the class and not another activity, such as texting or reading the newspaper. Doing these activities instead of participating in class will result in a failing score for the "in class participation" componen of your grade. I will give you one warning before this happens. You are welcome to bring food or beverages into the classroom as long as consumption will not distract other students. Thank you.

Tentative Content and Reading Schedule

Note: Any aspect of this syllabus, including the content and reading schedule, may be adjusted throughout the semester. Any changes will be announced in class and via ANGEL. Students are responsible for checking ANGEL on a regular basis. Please note that the topics and readings for the "To Be Determined" dates will be discussed in class and distributed via ANGEL email. You are responsible for either checking your ANGEL email or forwarding these messages to an account that you do check.

	Date	Topic	Reading Due
W	Jan. 13	Introductions, syllabus	Wikipedia on Web 2.0 (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Web_2)
		Web 2.0 definitional issues	O'Reilly, "What is Web 2.0" (online at http://tinyurl.com/743r5)
			Web Squared: Web 2.0 Five Years On By Tim O’Reilly and John Battelle (online at http://www.web2summit.com/web2009/public/schedule/detail/10194)
W	Jan. 20	Economic Principles	Shapiro & Varian, "Information Rules," chapters 1, 2, 4, 7, 8 (in packet)
W	Jan. 27	Mass Collaboration and Business Trends	Tapscott & Williams, "Wikinomics" (chapters 1, 2, 3, 5 (ok to skim), 7, 9 and 10.
		Company names to instructor	O'Reilly, "Web 2.0 compact definition" (online at http://radar.oreilly.com/archives/2006/12/web_20_compact.html)
W	Feb. 3	Organizing without organizations	Shirky, "Here comes everybody" in packet (chapters 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10)
W	Feb. 10	Economics of Social Production	Benkler, Wealth of Networks, Chapter 4 (PDF in ANGEL or online: http://www.congo-education.net/wealth-of-networks/ch-04.htm)

			Jun Loayza, 5 Business Models for Social Media Startups (online at http://mashable.com/2009/07/14/social-media-business-models/)
			Additional readings to be determined.
		Building a Web 2.0 business	Guest lecture: Michael Staton, Inigral (http://inigral.com/)
W	Feb. 17	Long Tail	Anderson, "Long Tail," chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 13, 14 (in packet)
W	Feb. 24	Social Production: Critical perspectives	Urstadt, "Social Networking is Not a Business" in ANGEL or online at http://www.technologyreview.com/business/20922/?a=f
		Paper topics due (via email)	Carr, Sharecropping the Long Tail (online at http://www.rough.type.com/archives/2006/12/sharecropping_t.php)
			Elberse, Should you invest in the long tail? (in ANGEL)
			Scholz, T. "Market ideology and the myths of web 2.0" (online at http://firstmonday.org/htbin/cgiwrap/bin/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/2138/1945)
			Jarvis, "Who owns the wisdom of the crowd?" (online at http://www.buzzmachine.com/2005/10/26/who-owns-the-wisdom-of-the-crowd-the-crowd/)
W	Mar. 3	Company Presentations	Company short paper due
W	Mar. 10	SPRING BREAK	Class does not meet
W	Mar. 17	Online presentation	"We Googled You" HBR Case Study (in packet)
		Google Yourself assignment due	Tribble, "Bloggers need not apply" (http://chronicle.com/article/Bloggers-Need-Not-Apply/45022/)
			Tribble, "They shoot messengers, don't they?" (http://chronicle.com/article/They-Shoot-Messengers-Don/45052/)
			Kirschenbaum, "Why I blog under my own name" (http://otal.umd.edu/~mgk/blog/archives/000813.html)
			Stross, "How to Lose Your Job on Your Own Time" (at http://www.nytimes.com/2007/12/30/business/30digi.html?ex=1356670800&en=bafd771bdcae2594&ei=5124&partner=permalink&expprod=permalink)
			boyd, "Controlling your public appearance" (online at http://www.zephoria.org/thoughts/archives/2007/09/07/controlling_you.html)

W	Mar. 24	Social Networks & Networking; SNS in the organization	boyd & Ellison, "Social network sites: Definition, history, and scholarship" (online at http://jcmc.indiana.edu/vol13/issue1/boyd.ellison.html)
		Guest Lecture: Dr. Joan DiMicco (IBM)	Wu, Dimicco, & Millen, "Detecting Professional versus Personal Closeness Using an Enterprise Social Network Site" (in ANGEL)
			Joan DiMicco, David R. Millen, Werner Geyer, Casey Dugan, Beth Brownholtz, Michael Muller, Motivations for Social Networking at Work (in ANGEL)
W	Mar. 31	Online networking strategies; Internet Advertising	Uzzi & Dunlap, "How to build your network" from HBR (in packet)
		Social Network Assessment Due	"20 ways to use LinkedIn productively" (online at http://webworkerdaily.com/2007/06/15/20-ways-to-use-linkedin-productively/)
		Guest Lecture: Al Cadena, Threshold Interactive	"Ten ways to use LinkedIn" (online at http://tinyurl.com/2fbver)
			Lauby, "HOW TO: Implement a Social Media Business Strategy" online at http://mashable.com/2009/12/28/social-media-business-strategy/
W	Apr. 7	Distributed Work; Online Production	Olson & Olson, "Distance Matters" (in packet)
		Guest Lecture: Maya Cohan	Nardi & Whittaker, "The place of face to face communication in distributed work" (in packet)
			To be determined
W	Apr. 14	Web 3.0	Borland, "A smarter web" (online at http://tinyurl.com/8hj92p)
			Roush, "What Comes After Web 2.0?" online at http://tinyurl.com/75uplo)
			To be determined
M	Apr. 21	To be determined	To be determined
W	Apr. 28	Presentations	Paper due.
W	6-May	Presentations	Final Exam week meeting
	5:45-7:45 p.m.		